



MOTHERS NOTEBOOK

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Nine Month Edition

How long should a mother breastfeed? The simple answer is a mother and her baby should breastfeed for as long as they want to. The American Pediatric Association recommends you breastfeed until at **least** one year but health outcomes for moms and baby are best when babies are breastfed for at least two years. Many of the health benefits of human milk are dose related, that is, the longer the baby nurses the greater the benefits.

Child-led Weaning

Child-led weaning actually begins when we introduce foods into a child's life and he begins to depend less on breastfeeding. Weaning is completed when the child no longer has a need to nurse and stops nursing. Sometimes children go through periods of time where they take a break from nursing but come back to nursing after a few days. If children are allowed to self-wean in their own time it is easier for both mom and baby.

Mother-led Weaning

Some moms decide to wean at a certain age. No matter what age you wean it is best to wean gradually. Gradual weaning allows you to slowly substitute other kinds of nutrition, affection and attention to make up for the loss of nursing. Weaning should occur slowly over a few weeks to make it easier on both you and your child. Also, many moms wean with mixed emotions so it's better to go slow and make sure you are ready.

Learning to Eat With the Family



Feeding himself is exciting for your baby. It allows him to experience not only the tastes of a wide variety of foods but to feel their texture with his hands as well as with his mouth. It also helps to exercise your baby's hand-eye coordination. Best of all, finger feeding and cup feeding encourages your baby to learn to feed himself. Some foods to offer are:

Cooked, grated or sliced vegetables

Macaroni, pasta or rice

Sliced banana or very small pieces of fruit

Bagels, stale are good for teething

Cubes or triangles of bread with cream cheese or butter

Pieces of pancake or waffle.

Dry WIC cereals

Canned black or pinto beans

Small pieces of soft cheese

Small cubes of well-cooked meat or poultry

Babies can use a cup by this age; offer one at meals and snacks. Use a training cup instead of a spill proof cup. A spill proof cup is more like a bottle and doesn't teach the baby how to drink from a cup. If you use a bottle, plan to wean from the bottle by age one. Bottle and spill proof cup use past age one can lead to tooth decay.